

**Please delete the present Abstract of the Disclosure and replace it with the following
new Abstract of the Disclosure.**

24 The image reading method apparatus read an image on an image recording medium by a visible light, read by scanning a specified detecting light in a one-dimensional direction using an optical path of the visible light and detect at least one of a foreign matter which adheres and a scratch which exists in the optical path of the visible light based on continuity of change of light quantity data of the thus read specified detecting light in the one-dimensional direction. The discriminating method of the defect of the image data detects optical defects existing in the optical system and on the image reading medium. The method and apparatus are capable of obtaining a high-quality print image by preventing the foreign matter such as [[the]] dust, dirt or the like which adheres or the scratch such as [[the]] an abrasion, cut or the like which exists in the image reading optical path or on the image recording medium from being transcribed onto a print image by the visible light.
